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A Foreign Policy for Peace

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Handwritten: Letter

A FOREIGN POLICY FOR PEACE

If I talk seriously with you tonight, it is because the subject with which I deal is deadly serious. If I ask you to forgo for a few minutes the undeniable pleasures of partisanship, it is because peace and war are matters which transcend parties. And it is of peace and war that I am going to talk--the hope for one, the danger of the other.

At this moment, there is a small area in the Panmunjom sector of the Korean front where no bombs fall, where machine guns and rifles are silent. Sick and wounded Americans and other UN soldiers have converged on this quiet area from the prison camps of North Korea, their mutilations grim reminders that war is not paid for in dollars alone but primarily in the blood, limbs and lives of human beings.

And from the prison camps of South Korea, into the same area, has come a steady stream of Communist sick and wounded. The two groups of prisoners are being exchanged in an orderly process in accordance with agreements negotiated by the UN and the Communist commanders.

Move out from the small truce area at Panmunjom and the picture changes. All along the line, stretching across the desolate hills of Korea, the grim struggle, now in its third year, continues. Napalm flashes light up the night. Machine gun bursts and rifle fire shatter the stillness. Communists kill, wound and capture UN forces and, in turn, are killed, wounded and captured.

In one small sector of the Korean front, there is the promise of peace. In the rest, the reality of war.

I have drawn this contrast because it illustrates in a way the kind of dilemma in which we and other peoples of the world find ourselves in this spring of 1953.

In our hearts, we cling to a small sector which holds the hope of a durable meaningful peace. The rest is flooded with the fear of war. And in our minds, one question predominates: will the hope prevail or will the flood of a third world war envelop it, not only at Panmunjom but over the face of the globe?

This same question, in a sense, has been with us almost since the close of World War II. If the answer were ours alone to give, I think we would have long since given it. But it is not ours alone. The answer, the final answer, is locked within the walls of the Kremlin.

I do not mean to suggest that we are absolved of all responsibility in this issue of peace or war or that we must sit helplessly waiting for the blow to descend when the Kremlin decides to loose it. On the contrary, what decisions we make or do not make, what actions we take or fail to take are bound to influence profoundly the final answer that issues from the brooding political fortress in Moscow.

What we have done, the actions we have so far taken in the postwar years, I believe, have already had an effect on the answer. They have served to restrain until now the forces of aggression from plunging the world into full-scale strife. They have been instrumental in instilling in many free nations the economic stability necessary to maintain internal order and to contribute to the collective defense of peace. They have helped to create, in short, situations of strength in many parts of the free world.

These actions of postwar foreign policy have been the actions of mature leadership, motivated by a deep sense of the responsibility that has fallen to the United States and an inspired faith in the future of freedom. These actions have so far prevented World War III--these actions, and not vain threats hurled across the ocean from the towers of New York or the shaking of fists from armchairs in Washington.

I am happy to report to you, tonight, that the President and the Secretary of State have shown during the first few weeks of their tenures evidence of continuing in foreign policy, in the same responsible vein as their predecessors. Initial appointments in this field have generally been sound. The removal of the Seventh Fleet from partial duties in the Formosan Straits, which the President ordered soon after his inauguration, was justified by the changing situation on the Chinese mainland and on Formosa. Let there be no mistake, however, about the purpose of the order that originally put the Fleet into the straits. It was not, as has been implied for purposes of politics, a measure to restrain the National Government from launching military action against the mainland. The Nationalists were utterly incapable of such action when the order was issued in 1950. On the contrary, it probably saved them from complete annihilation by the Chinese Communist armies which were then on the verge of launching an assault on Formosa.

In his first major foreign policy address after assuming office, his speech of April 16, the President gave eloquent expression to the consuming desire of the American people and of people everywhere, for peace. That he could make an address of this kind at all was due to the sound groundwork which had previously been laid ~~by a Democratic Administration~~. He was able to speak for peace from a platform of strength, a platform supported by the military power of the United States and the highest degree of unity ever achieved among free nations in

peacetime. And in painting his plea for disarmament in the bright colors of a better and fuller life for peoples everywhere he had before him the model bequeathed to all of us by the late great ~~Democrat~~^{Senator} from Connecticut, Brian MacMahon.

The President's peace proposal was well-timed and well-spoken. Will it lead, if not to durable peace, at least to an easing of the present tensions which threaten to tear the world apart? The final answer, as I have already suggested, must be sought, not in Washington or even in Panmunjom, but in Moscow. In dealing with the Soviet Union, there are few certainties; there are at best merely indicators. To the outside world, Stalin's death has had only one certain effect: an enigmatic scowl has replaced an enigmatic smile in the Kremlin. But if that has been the only certainty, there have been many indicators of far-reaching changes inside the Soviet Union and in its foreign policy. Doctors are suddenly released from jails where they have languished on false convictions of poisoning high officials. Soviet newspapers speak of an end to one-man rule. Abroad, the peace feelers become too numerous and too insistent to be ignored. The Russians agree to discuss air safety over Germany. American editors are invited to visit the USSR. Truce talks are resumed at Panmunjom. And finally, the Soviet press reacts with almost unprecedented courtesy to an address on peace by the President of the United States.

That there is a pattern in these developments in Soviet foreign policy goes without saying. But what does it signify? Are the Russians sincerely interested in a settlement of the issues which divide the world? Or are these recent moves mere feints to lull the West into a false sense of security? Or are they designed, perhaps, to split the United States and Western Europe? Or could it be that all Soviet moves in the international arena at this time

are cloaks to conceal debilitating developments inside the vast Soviet empire?

It is entirely possible that Stalin's death has produced schisms within the sprawling Communist world and that they are spreading from the eastern European satellites to the Pacific. It may also be that the real successor to Stalin does not yet sit upon the Soviet throne. If this is so, then the struggle for succession is likely to narrow down eventually to two men. Just as Lenin's choice, Trotsky, was forced to give way to Stalin, so too may Stalin's selection, Malenkov, yet have to yield to Deputy Premier Lavrenti Beria. Beria is master of the secret police and the atomic projects east of the Urals. As Minister of Interior, he rides the same road that has led practically all of the present rulers of the Communist states through the dark labyrinths of the political underworld to ultimate power.

Whatever the probability, one thing is certain: Stalin's death has produced one of the decisive moments in the history of the 20th Century. If this nation rises to the demands of the moment, we may yet lead the world out of the shadow of atomic annihilation into a new era of international enlightenment and human progress. If we falter, it is possible that the delicately balanced international structure which presently houses not only the heritage of freedom but the heart of civilization itself may be blasted into historical oblivion.

We will not fail if we continue to discharge our responsibilities with the same dedication and determination that we have displayed during the last decade. We will not fail if, in the international arena, we act with wisdom, with restraint and with singleness of purpose.

We cannot know with any certainty what is in the Soviet mind. We can know what is in our own. Speculations on what Russia will do next may be an interesting diversion, but they will not lead to peace. I believe we can have peace or at least a measure of security in which freedom can live, work and breathe, only if we are clear in our minds that, regardless of Soviet gestures, we must continue to build in the future on the groundwork that has been laid in the past. If we would have peace we must do what must be done. We must take the actions that must be taken.

First of all there is a need for a single line of authority in the expression and conduct of our official foreign policy. It is time for amateurs to stop playing at diplomacy. It is time for generals, retired or otherwise, to cease the unmilitary practice of grinding their axes in public. It is time, finally, to unify the conduct of foreign policy under the President and the Secretary of State. There are at present so many official Americans and so many agencies operating abroad that the voice of America seems to issue from a tower of Babel. As a first step in ending this expensive, dangerous and sometimes ludicrous situation, we should dissolve the Mutual Security Agency and transfer to the Department of State any residual functions it may have.

Abroad, we must continue to work to perfect and to extend the many instrumentalities which have already been established for maintaining the stability and collective security of free nations. These instrumentalities are essential regardless of the intent of the Russian peace feelers. If these peace feelers are genuine, the NATO, the Organization of the American States, the Pacific Security pacts and the United Nations are not impediments to a settlement. There is sufficient flexibility in all of them to adjust

to new situations. If the feelers are not genuine, then these links become all the more vital to us and to other free nations.

We must not allow these positive measures for world stability to be side-tracked by Soviet moves whose full significance we cannot begin to comprehend. The Russians may be entirely sincere about a settlement at this time; they may very well desire, for reasons of their own, a temporary easement of the tensions between East and West. It does not follow, however, that the long-range struggle between freedom and tyranny is about to end. And it is with the realities of the long-range that our foreign policy must deal if it is really to serve the needs of the nation. The regional security arrangements which have been so painstakingly devised during the past five or six years are long-range instruments, not temporary toys to be picked up or dropped at the whim of the Soviet Union.

The task before us, then, is to continue to extend the gains for freedom which have already been registered. In Western Europe, the NATO build-up must go on. A way must be found to reconcile the French and the Germans so that the latter can be brought firmly and irrevocably into the Western world. And a way must also be found to solve the deep-seated economic difficulties of Europe. We should continue to urge and to assist the Europeans towards economic integration. Beyond integration, the need is for trade not aid. Only in this manner can we halt giveaways without at the same time inviting Western Europe to turn east to trade and tyranny.

The policies of the present administration towards Western Europe appear to be growing logically out of the past and to be in accord with current needs. There has been some dragging of feet in coming to grips with economic questions

but, on the other hand, the President's recent proposal to admit 240,000 additional refugees, if adopted, should help to solve the more acute problems of population pressure.

Similarly, policy in the Far East has thus far been a logical continuation of measures taken in the preceding years. I have already mentioned the removal of the 7th Fleet from the Formosan Straits. I should like to stress, however, that this action must not be the beginning of a descent which will lead us step by step after the Chinese Nationalists into the quicksands of the Chinese mainland. Whatever course we pursue with respect to the Far East, and in the final situation there we can hardly predict that course, it is most essential that we act largely in concert with other free nations. For the present, I do not think that we should allow ourselves to build unreal hopes for easy solutions ~~based on non-existent strength in Formosa~~. We would do better to deal with the grim unfinished business in Korea.

The objectives which we had in going into Korea, and which we still have, were to preserve the South Korean Republic, to stop and to punish the aggression against that Republic. By stopping a local aggression we hoped to prevent a general war later; by fighting in Korea we hoped to save this land of ours from attack in the future.

What we did not set out to do in Korea, what we were not required by any mandate of the United Nations to do, was to unify all of Korea by force. The task of unifying Korea, is a task for the Korean people themselves with whatever help may be given them by the United States. What we did not set out to do was to begin World War III.

We failed once to distinguish what we set out to do and what we did not set out to do in Korea. I trust that we shall not fail again. In November 1950, United Nations forces had pushed back a beachhead at Pusan to the thirty-eighth parallel. At that point we had accomplished what we had set out to do. We had met the aggressors, punished them severely, and all but destroyed their armies. The security of our forces made it necessary to advance some distance beyond the thirty-eighth parallel.

When these forces had reached the narrow defensible neck of the Korean peninsula, some miles south of the Chinese border, I urged that we call a halt to the advance and try to create a buffer zone along the Chinese Manchurian and Korean frontier. But in the mistaken belief fostered by faulty military intelligence, that the Chinese Communists would not enter the war, that we could "end the war by Christmas" our troops were sent probing, in dangerously extended lines, towards the Chinese border.

The Chinese Communists entered the conflict. We suffered a major defeat. Some of those who just a few weeks before had been most vociferous in urging our advance to the Chinese border began to press for two alternatives, and they have been at it ever since, either the complete abandonment of Korea or the extension of the war all the way into Manchuria and beyond. This "get in or get out" extremism would profit no one but our enemies.

The recent exchange of the sick and wounded prisoners gives us some hope that a truce may yet be negotiated at Panmunjom. We should be prepared to continue negotiations on the basis of the Indian proposal of last year. We have accepted that proposal; the Communists have not. When they are ready to end the fighting, they will acknowledge that India has offered a solution

that is both just and honorable. In the meantime, the administration should carry out the campaign promise to accelerate the training of South Korean troops ~~so that American forces in Korea can be reduced.~~ ¹²⁻¹⁴⁻⁵⁰ so that American forces in Korea can be reduced.

I have spoken at some length of the problems which must be dealt with in Europe and the Far East for they are the principal keys to war or peace. Elsewhere in the world, however, other difficulties confront us. In the Middle East, the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute, the Suez-Sudan issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict must be resolved in a manner that will produce cooperation and not bitterness among the parties involved. Out of such solutions will come the basis for a Middle East Command which can be linked with the NATO in a continuous belt of defense stretching around the perimeter of Western and Southern Europe.

Closer to home, in Latin America, we must act quickly to repair the damage done to the Good Neighbor policy by our neglect of this area. Signs are multiplying but the Communist infection which has settled into Guatemala may be spreading to surrounding areas. The time to stop the infection is now.

In this brief talk tonight, I have catalogued some of the problems with which our foreign policy must cope successfully if it is to lead to a genuinely peaceful world. We cannot expect the present administration or any administration to solve all of these problems. What we can expect, what we have every right to expect is that this administration will continue to grapple with them in an intelligent constructive fashion. As long as they strive to do so, the President and the Secretary of State have a right to expect in return our confidence and support. And they shall have it from us, not grudgingly and reluctantly, but willingly as befits Americans who place country above party.

I should like to return briefly in closing to the contrast that I drew at the outset. I spoke then of the small sector of peace and the long line of continuing conflict in Korea. I should like to say now that if the truce^{the} that holds tenuously at Panmunjom spreads across/length and breadth of Korea, I believe it may well mark the first major step of the world away from the brink of the catastrophe on which it has tottered for too long.

I do not know what the outcome will be in Korea; the issue still hangs in a delicate intricate balance. I can only express my own feelings and yours when I say that our profoundest desire, tonight, is that the step taken will lead not into the long night of a third world war, but towards a new era of peace for all mankind.

Mike's Reno Dinner
in N.Y. 4/29/53

Mike:

On page 9 in the third^{line} from the ~~last~~ bottom there is
the word "laid" --- in the original speech on page 6
they had the word "paid". We thought it should have been
laid~~and~~ instead.

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